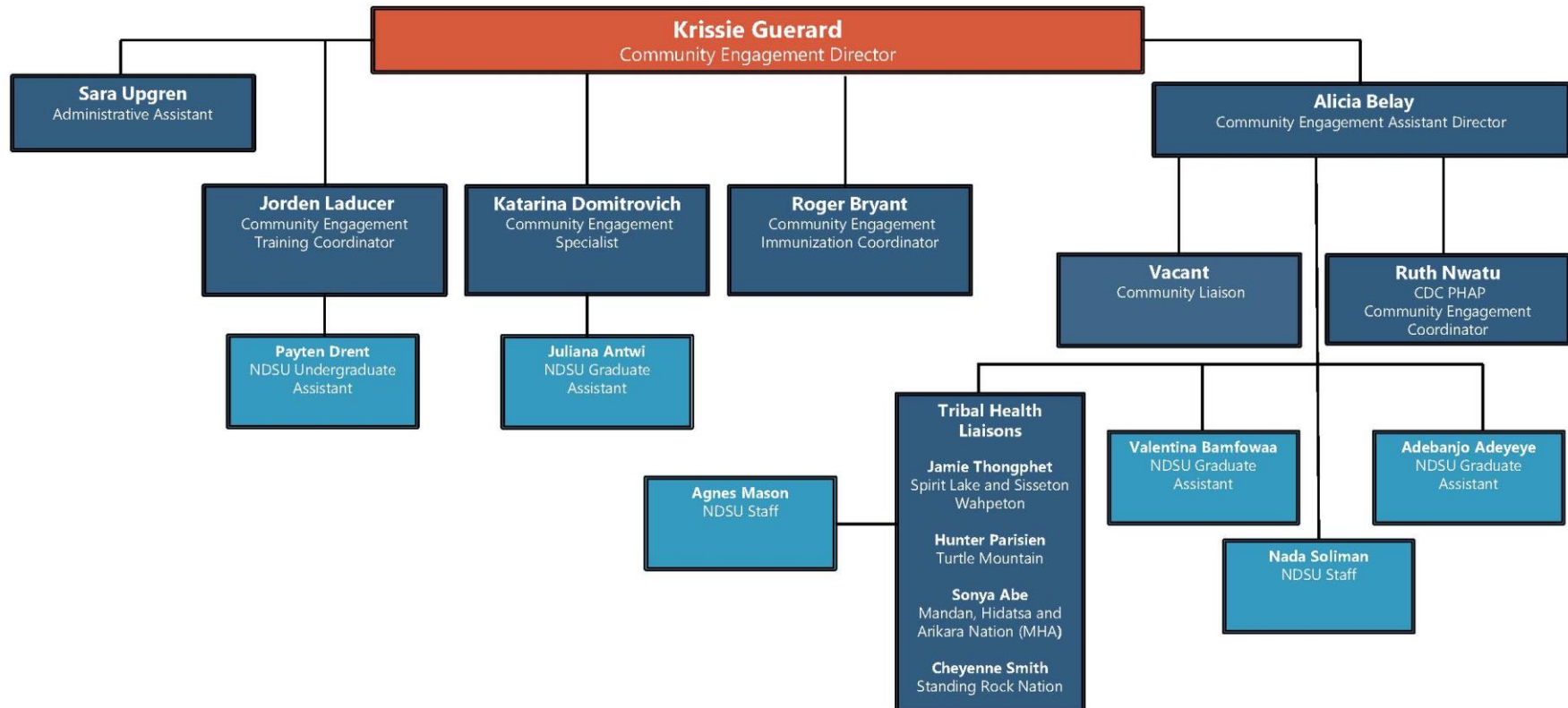


# Community Engagement Unit

Organization Chart  
December 2022



## **Mission**

***The mission of the Community Engagement (CE) Unit is to understand and reduce health disparities among all North Dakotans. The primary goal is to work alongside North Dakota communities in addressing health-related needs to reduce disease rates by providing opportunities for interventions and improving access to health care. This will ensure that all North Dakotans have the ability to reach their optimal health.***

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/health/equity>

## **Staff**

### **Community Engagement Director, Krissie Guerard**

The primary purpose of this position is to lead efforts to ensure that community engagement is addressed in all policies, programs and funding decisions at HHS while directing the CE unit. The Director is responsible for the oversight and management of the CE unit. The position focuses on building knowledge of and action to address the root cause of health inequities and develop and implement systemic measurement for evaluation.

### **Community Engagement Administrative Assistant III, Sara Upgren**

The primary purpose of this position is to provide administrative support to the CE unit. The Administrative Assistant III assists in contract management, travel plans and reimbursement, creating, formatting and editing documents. This position also assists with coordinating various activities, meetings, conferences and workshops, and is responsible for coordinating calendars, scheduling meetings and acting as a liaison between management and employees.

### **Community Engagement Assistant Director, Alicia Belay**

This position works to provide guidance to the HIV.STD.TB and Viral Hepatitis program, surrounding how to incorporate health equity measures into program objectives. The Assistant Director coordinates focus groups and other needs assessment activities to gather information for consideration by the HIV.STD.TB and Viral Hepatitis program.

This position assists in the state Title V/Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant activities. This portion of the position focuses on MCH priority projects as needed and directed by the Title V/MCH Director. The Assistant Director leads the well-woman initiative to improve preventative health for women 18-44 and will work closely with the North and South Dakota Perinatal Quality Collaborative (NSDPQC) to improve maternal outcomes.

The Assistant Director is responsible for overseeing and managing the Tribal Health Liaisons, Community Liaison and interns through the master's in public health program at North Dakota State University, including human resource/staff management and oversight.

### **Community Engagement Specialist, Katarina Domitrovich**

The primary purpose of this position is to work within the CE unit in the management of COVID-19-related activities, contract management, the COVID-19 strategic plan and grant reporting. The second priority of this position is to engage with North Dakota youth. She is the state-appointed co-chair of the Youth Advisory Board. The CE Specialist also assists with other health equity-related activities as needed.

### **Community Engagement Training Coordinator, Jorden Laducer**

The primary purpose of this position is to lead outreach and training to individuals serving North Dakota's most underserved populations. The CE Training Coordinator also works to better understand different community needs, facilitate information sharing and improve health outcomes. The CE Training Coordinator works to strategize with stakeholders to develop and implement methods to better serve underserved populations in North Dakota, such as rural communities, Persons with Disabilities, the aging population, (Lesbian/Gay/Bi-sexual/Transgender/Queer/Two-Spirit) LGBTQ2S+, etc. The CE Training Coordinator serves as the co-chair for the LGBTQ2S+ BeYOU Advisory Board.

### **Tribal Health Liaisons:**

Primary Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation (MHA), Secondary Standing Rock Nation (Western North Dakota), **Sonya Abe**

Primary Standing Rock Nation, Secondary MHA (Western North Dakota), **Cheyenne Smith**

Primary Turtle Mountain, Secondary Spirit Lake and Sisseton Wahpeton (Eastern North Dakota), **Hunter Parisien**

Primary Spirit Lake and Sisseton Wahpeton, Secondary Turtle Mountain (Eastern North Dakota), **Jamie Thongphet**

The primary purpose of these positions is to act as liaisons to the NDHHS on tribal health needs and concerns. The positions assist the HHS's CE and the Division of Disease Control in addressing vaccine hesitancy and conducting education and awareness for the five federally recognized tribes in North Dakota and surrounding rural and urban areas. These positions assist with conducting disease investigations and interventions for reportable conditions and provide education and awareness for infectious and chronic diseases as needed and/or requested to the North Dakota tribal communities.

The Tribal Health Liaisons work with a team approach. They have primary responsibility for one of the Tribal Nations in North Dakota and secondary responsibilities/serve as backup for another Tribal Nation. They work in pairs of two to divide urban area tribal responsibilities into the Eastern and Western sides of North Dakota.

### **Community Liaison, Vacant**

The primary purpose of this position is to assist the HHS CE unit and the Division of Disease Control in addressing vaccine hesitancy and conducting education and awareness for COVID-19 and other chronic and infectious diseases in underserved populations which includes North Dakota's rural populations and the New American/Foreign Born/Immigrant (NFI) population. The position helps the CE unit identify and work through the barriers that prevent North Dakota communities from receiving the services provided to them. The position assists with conducting disease investigations and interventions for reportable

conditions and provides education and awareness for infectious and chronic diseases as needed and/or requested in the NFI population. This position serves as the state-appointed co-chair for the NFI Advisory Board.

**Community Engagement Immunization Coordinator, Roger Bryant**

The primary purpose of this position is to work within the CE unit in collaboration with the Immunization Unit to improve vaccination rates among North Dakota's special populations, including but not limited to: rural communities, NFI, Black/African American, American Indian, LGBTQ2S+, Persons that Inject Drugs, Homeless, Elderly, Persons with Disabilities, etc.

**CDC Public Health Associates (PHAP) / Community Engagement Coordinator, Ruth Nwatu**

The PHAP is a competitive, two-year, paid training program with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). PHAP associates are assigned to public health agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and US territories and work alongside other professionals across various public health settings. Throughout the two-year training program, associates gain hands-on experience that will serve as a foundation for their public health careers. After completing the program, PHAP graduates are qualified to apply for jobs with public health agencies and organizations.

The PHAP program is a competitive application process that states apply for.

The PHAPs in the CE unit are responsible for assisting the Unit in all aspects of the job descriptions listed above.

**CE Graduate Assistants, Internships and NDSU Staff** - NDSU Interns – Adebanjo Adeyeye, Valentina Bamfowaa, Juliana Antwi and Payton Drent; NDSU Staff – Agnes Mason and Nada Soliman

These positions within the CE unit assist with all programmatic needs that staff identify. The positions are geared toward public health students or those who recently graduated to gain real-world public health experience.